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ELECTROCHEMICAL INTERCALATION AND ELECTRICAL
CONDUCTIVITY OF GRAPHITE FIBERS

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(NASA-TM-77008) ELECTROCHEMICAL
INTERCALATION AND ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY OF
GRAPHITE FIBERS (National Aeronautics and
Space Administration) 8 p HC A02/MF A01

N83-33979

Unclas
CSCL 07D G3/25 36092

Translation of "Elektrochemische Intercalation und elektrische Leitfae-
higkeit von Graphitfasern," Zeitschrift fuer Naturforschung, B: Anorg. Chem.,
Org. Chem. 1978, vol. 33B, no. 7, pp. 737-739.



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546 DECEMBER 1982

STANDARD TITLE PAGE

1. Report No. NASA TM-77008	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle ELECTROCHEMICAL INTERCALATION AND ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY OF GRAPHITE FIBERS		5. Report Date DECEMBER 1982	6. Performing Organization Code
7. Author(s) J. O. Besenhard, H. P. Fritz, H. Moehwald and J. J. Nickl		8. Performing Organization Report No.	10. Work Unit No.
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Leo Kanner Associates Redwood City, California 94063		11. Contract or Grant No. NASw-3541	13. Type of Report and Period Covered Translation
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, D.C. 20546		14. Sponsoring Agency Code	
15. Supplementary Notes Translation of "Elektrochemische Intercalation und elektrische Leitfaehigkeit von Graphittfasern," Zeitschrift fuer Naturforschung, B: Anorg. Chem., Org. Chem. 1978, vol. 33B, no. 7, pp. 737-739.			
16. Abstract Lamellar compounds of graphite fibers have been prepared by electrochemical intercalation. The dependence of the electrical resistance on the intercalate concentration was determined by a quasi simultaneous method. A factor 30 decrease of the relative fiber resistance was obtained with fluorosulfuric acid.			
ORIGINAL PAGE IS OF POOR QUALITY			
17. Key Words (Selected by Author(s))		18. Distribution Statement Unlimited-Unclassified	
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 6	22.

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OF POOR QUALITY

ELECTROCHEMICAL INTERCALATION AND ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY OF GRAPHITE FIBERS

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Introduction

/737*

Through the investigations of Ruedorff (1) and Ubbelohde (2-5) we know that the electrical conductivity of lamellar graphite compounds is greater than that of graphite. Vogel (6) found in the treatment of graphite fibers with red, fuming HNO₃ a reduction of the specific resistance of $7.5 \times 10^{-4} \Omega \text{ cm}$ to $7 \times 10^{-5} \Omega \text{ cm}$, therefore by a factor 10.

This article reports on the electrochemical interaction of graphite fibers with very high modulus of elasticity in strong acids; here the relation between the degree of intercalation and the electrical conductivity is of particular interest.

The authors used the commercial graphite fibers Celion GY 70 of the company Celanese, USA (modulus of elasticity = $5.17 \times 10^{11} \text{ Nm}^{-2}$) and Mornel^R 50 of Union Carbide, USA (modulus of elasticity = $4 \times 10^{11} \text{ Nm}^{-2}$).

The incorporation and subsequent measurement of resistance took place at room temperature on individual fibers 3 to 4 cm long; to this end these were in u-shaped contact on Cu bars and the contact points were subsequently gold-plated by galvanic means.

To adjust certain degrees of intercalation the fibers were oxidized anodically with 2 mA direct current, while Pt was used as counterelectrode.

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By this method as we know it is possible to prepare even very small degrees of incorporation (3,7).

The intercalation was interrupted periodically (alternating switch) and the resistance of the fiber was determined practically free from debt time through the drop in voltage for 10^{-4} A direct current.

Test measurements showed that with this method the flow of current through the electrolyte is negligible so that the resistance of the fibers could be determined directly in the electrolyte solution.

Raster electron microscopy photographs showed that the fibers used were not at all round or uniform in cross-section; therefore the specific electrical resistance was not indicated¹.

The measurement results were represented by the dependence of the relative fiber resistance R/R_0 on the mass standardized charge quantity Q standardized. Thus it is assured that a certain Q standardized gives for all studied fibers a certain degree of intercalation (Figures 1 and 2). The weights of the individual fibers could not be determined with sufficient precision, so that the standardization was carried out to a factor proportional to weight l^2/R_0 (l = fiber length, R_0 = resistance of the initial fiber).

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows a variation of R/R_0 as a function of Q standardized for Celion GY 70 in about 96 percent H₂SO₄.

¹For a typical cross-section of 7×10^{-7} cm² for Celion GY 70 the specific resistance is calculated at about $7 \times 10^{-4} \Omega$ cm.

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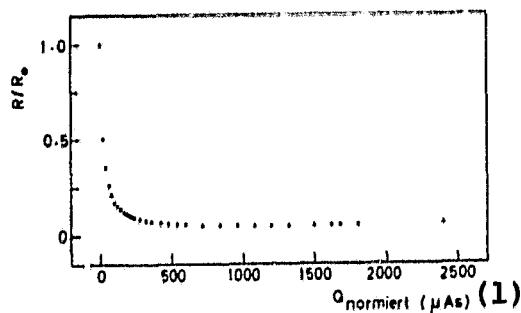


Figure 1: Relative resistance of Celion GY 70 as a function of Q standardized.

Key: (1) Q standardized.

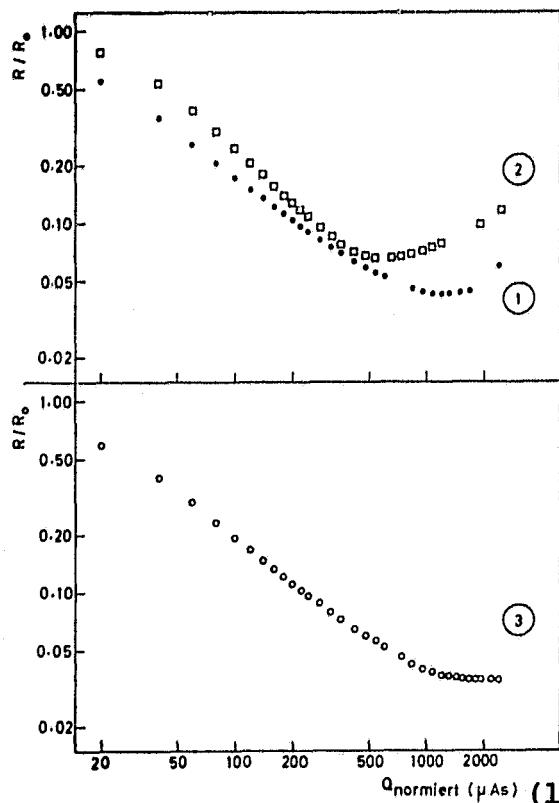


Figure 2: Relative resistance of Celion GY 70 as a function of (the double logarithmic) degree of intercalation; electrolyte = (1) about 96 percent H_2SO_4 , (2) 70 percent H_2SO_4 , (3) 100 percent FSO_3H . Key: (1) Q standardized.

The very sharp drop of R/R_0 for a low degree of incorporation is characteristic. An estimate shows that for about 96 percent H_2SO_4 and 100 percent FSO_3H (Figure 2, curve 3) a reduction of R/R_0 to half of the initial value is achieved already for a ratio of the C atoms/intercalate

= 1500 to 1; this corresponds to an incorporation density of about 7 by 10^{19} anions per cm³. There is no linear relation between anion density and the relative resistance R/R₀, rather R/R₀ tends with increasing degree of incorporation to a saturation value.

Figure 2 shows R/R₀ plotted in double logarithmic representation against Q standardized.

In this representation we obtain a case of nondehydrated acid, a clear minimum; the latter for about 96 percent H₂SO₄ lies in the range of C₂₄ + HSO₄⁻ (=first stage) and for 70 percent H₂SO₄ for a lower degree of incorporation. This may be explained by the fact that intercalation takes place initially and after passing through a minimum the formation of "graphite oxide" begins. This minimum does not appear for 100 percent FSO₃H; here there is no water needed to form the "graphite oxide". With decreasing acid concentration this minimum is observed earlier (Figure 2, curve 2) since the hydrolysis of the graphite salt takes place earlier according to



The greatest variation of resistance was found for dehydrated FSO₃H as electrolyte; here a ratio was obtained R₀/R_{min} = 30.

The table shows further results:

Elektrolyt (1)		R ₀ /R _{min}
H ₂ SO ₄	ca. 100-proz. (2)	23
H ₂ SO ₄	ca. 96-proz.	23-25
H ₂ SO ₄	90-proz.	23
H ₂ SO ₄	80-proz.	16
H ₂ SO ₄	70-proz.	15
HClO ₄	70-proz.	13
FSC ₃ H	100-proz.	30-33
HNO ₃	100-proz.	19
CF ₃ CO ₂ H	100-proz.	20

Key: (1) Electrolyte; (2) percent.

From the table it may be seen that in the case of sulfuric acid in a concentration range of 100 to 90 percent acid practically the same value is obtained for R_o/R_{min} .

For Thornel^R50 fibers similar values were found for R_o/R_{min} , of course the specific resistance of the initial fibers is higher by a factor of about 3 than for Celion GY 70.

For all intercalation tests it was observed that the mechanical properties and the diameter of the fibers vary only a little. Since the density of Celion GY 70 is about 1.6 gcm^{-3} (graphite 2.25 gcm^{-3}), it may be assumed that internal cavities are filled predominantly by the expansion of the layers. /739

If organic electrolyte solutions are used for the electrochemical oxidation (incorporation of anions) or reduction (incorporation of cations) considerable decreases of resistance are also found. A forthcoming report will be published on this area and on the dependence of incorporation on the modulus of elasticity.

We thank Dr. A. Lerf, of the Central Institute of Low Temperature Research of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Garching for many stimulating discussions.

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